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Man Wins Suit On Falsifying Of Fingerprints

LOS ANGELES (UPI) — A truck driver imprisoned for 2½ years as a bank robber because a policeman falsified fingerprint evidence was awarded a $750,000 settlement yesterday by the City of Buena Park, Calif.

William DePalma, 37, his wife and three children were overcome with emotion as they emerged from the federal courthouse. His daughters, 18, 11 and 8, wept.

"They're tears of joy," DePalma said. "They went through hell. But there's no way they can pay me back for what I went through. They could offer me this whole building (the courthouse) and it wouldn't compensate me for what I've gone through."

In 1968, DePalma was convicted of bank robbery and sentenced to 15 years in federal prison, largely on the strength of testimony by Buena Park police Sgt. James Bakken, who identified a fingerprint found in the bank as DePalma's.